

Wichita City Council Workshop

Revision - Chapter 6.04

Exotic Animals

**Environmental
Services**

November 20, 2007



What's at Issue

- Revision of City Code -
Chapter 6.04 Animal Control and Protection
- In August a wallaby ran away from its owner; after media coverage, it was found a day later running at large
- The Environmental Services Animal Control Section has enforced a City ban of owning exotic animals for over a decade, and that included a wallaby so the owner was ticketed
- A municipal court judge agreed that the wallaby was exotic but ruled one section was unclear as to the exceptions and dismissed the charges against the owner

Existing Exotic Animal Code

City Code Section 6.04.010 (e)

Definition: "Exotic animal" means those animals not indigenous to North America and animals of any species the majority of whose population are feral.

City Code Section 6.04.040

(f) It is unlawful for any person to... (12) Keep or maintain, sell or offer for sale, barter or give away exotic animals; provided ...

Exceptions to Keeping Exotic Animals

City Code Section 6.04.040 (f)(12):

...provided, this section shall not apply to:

- tropical or other fishes;
- birds, except those prohibited by federal or state law;
- small rodents such as gerbils, rats, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, chinchillas, mink, nutria and similar fur-bearing mammals;
- nonpoisonous amphibians and reptiles, not including pythons, anacondas, boa constrictors, monitor lizards, iguanas, alligators, caiman, crocodiles and turtles;...

Summary

- Prohibits ownership of wild animals and most non-native animals
- Allows for reptiles and amphibians that do not pose a serious health risk
- Allows for small rodents and “similar fur bearing mammals”*

* According to the judge, it was difficult to determine if wallabies fell within the exception of “similar fur bearing mammals”

Clarification Proposed

Environmental Services presented to Council a draft ordinance that, among other things, included a clarification to address the judge's issue:

- Delete “similar fur bearing mammals”
- Specify exceptions by simply listing
“small pets such as gerbils, rats, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, *ferrets (new)*, chinchillas, and mink”

Intent of Exotic Animal Ordinance

Exotic animal ordinances have been enacted all over the country in the last few decades to protect:

- Public Health
- Public Safety
- Animal Welfare

Exotics: Public Health Risk

Exotic animals are known to spread disease to humans – zoonotic diseases

- Avian flu, SARs, Monkey Pox, Salmonella, Tularemia (Rabbit flu), West Nile
- These illnesses are of particular concern because they are non-native; while the diseases may be somewhat harmless in their natural context, their introduction into non-resistant populations can pose serious problems
- Eighty to 90 percent of all macaque monkeys are infected with Herpes B-virus or Simian B, a virus that is harmless to monkeys but fatal to 70 percent of humans who contract it.
- Ninety percent of all reptiles carry and shed Salmonella in their feces. Iguanas, snakes, lizards, and turtles are common carriers of the bacteria.

Exotics: Public Safety Risk

- Unpredictability of Wild Animals
 - Easily escapes confinement
 - Runs or crawls into street to be hit by passing cars/trucks
- Physical Attacks
 - Agitated in unfamiliar surroundings and may attack, bite, scratch, kick
 - Depending on the animal, may kill pets or humans

Exotics: Animal Welfare Concerns

- Animals cute and cuddly when small but as they grow and challenge urban living, are often abandoned, released or dumped in the country
 - Escape from zoos or owners cause feral populations to develop
- Confined areas cause muscle atrophy
- Uneducated owners can inflict starvation or improper nutrition on a wild/exotic animal and proper hygiene procedures if not followed.
- Many animals are relinquished at already overcrowded animal shelters for euthanasia

Wallabies

- Mammal with about 30-45 species (Family - Macropodidae)
- Some now extinct
- Native to Australia, 5 – 65 pounds at full growth, a grass forager that can live in diverse areas including prairies, rocky areas, or by beaches.
- Large feral populations found in New Zealand (considered nuisances and are hunted) with other small isolated populations on other continents



Disease from Wallabies

Diseases can be transmitted from wallabies to other animals and to humans (zoonotic)

- A 2003 state of Michigan Report stated that a sick wallaby was confirmed to have spread *Salmonella* to its owner's family members
- A 2003 report from the state of Wisconsin identified concern when Monkey pox spread from an African rodent to prairie dogs causing a federal action making it illegal to own these animals.

Wallaby Incidents in the US

December 11, 2005

KANGAROO ROADKILL IN WISCONSIN

Wallaby on the loose
in Pennsylvania
town

Published: Jan. 24,
2007



Wallaby caught in
Calif. backyard

Published: Feb. 7, 2007



Animal Abuse



George the Wallaby was kept in a filthy pen on a Gloucester County (New Jersey) dog breeder's property. During an investigation, the local ACO discovered that the man had accepted George in lieu of payment for a puppy. Since the breeder had no permit and didn't want the Wallaby anyway, the ACO took George and brought him to us. George has just gotten over a lengthy battle of lump jaw which is a slow growing bone infection that can be controlled, but not cured. (Associated Humane Societies)

Illegal Animal Trafficking

Police bust exotic animal ring

Published: Nov. 8, 2007

LIVONIA, Mich., Nov. 8 (UPI) -- Scores of stolen exotic animals -- some of them poisonous and some of them just a strange variety -- have been recovered near Flint, Mich.

Raids on two Genesee County, Mich., homes netted 20 to 50 wild animals, including a kinkajou, **wallaby**, toucans, scorpions, tarantulas and a monitor lizard named Rupert, the Flint Journal and [WDIV-TV](#), Detroit reported.

United Press International

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Public Comment Provided Opposing Significant Exotic Animal Changes

- **State Public Health Veterinarian**
- **Local Veterinarians**
- **United States Humane Society**

Public Health Risks/Exotics

According to the State Public Health Veterinarian:

Gail R. Hansen, DVM, MPH

State Epidemiologist

Director, Office of Surveillance and Epidemiology

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

- Most wildlife arrive in the United States with no quarantine and minimal screening for disease
- There has been so little research into zoonotic diseases that it is reckless to have close contact with animals who were never meant to come in close proximity to man

Public Health Risks/Exotics

According to the State Public Health Veterinarian:

- Unusual diseases can come to the U.S. from exotic wildlife kept as pets
- For this reason, The American Veterinary Medical Association, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Animal Control Association, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association and the CDC all discourage the private ownership of most exotic animals

Public Health Risks/Wallabies

According to the State Public Health Veterinarian:

Rabies

There is no licensed vaccine to protect a wallaby from rabies. If a wallaby bites or scratches someone, Kansas law, K.S.A. 75-5661 and K.A.R. 28-1-13, requires that the animal be sacrificed and tested for rabies.

Public Health Risks/Wallabies

According to the State Public Health Veterinarian:

- Primary concern is that wallabies can carry zoonotic pathogens, diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans
- Among the known diseases from wallabies are *Salmonella*, tuberculosis, Q fever, a tapeworm that can cause hydatid disease, and rabies
- Some of these diseases are considered rare in wallabies, but assuring that they are disease free and remain disease free would be a difficult task, as most zookeepers are aware

Potential Ecological Harm

- There have been no studies to determine potential ecological impacts in Kansas, if feral colonies were to be established
- Wallabies have established feral colonies in New Zealand and are considered a nuisance and have to be controlled; some areas require sterilization of owned animals
- In Australia some wallabies and kangaroos negatively affect the cattle industry and have to be controlled

Wallaby Animal Welfare

- Wallabies are wild animals and can be unpredictable and want to roam
- Species varying in size, temperament, and requirements for care
- Some species are considered threatened
- Wallabies are grazing animals that require adequate open space and grass
- Wallabies are sensitive to stress and loud noises, not suited to confinement required in urban areas

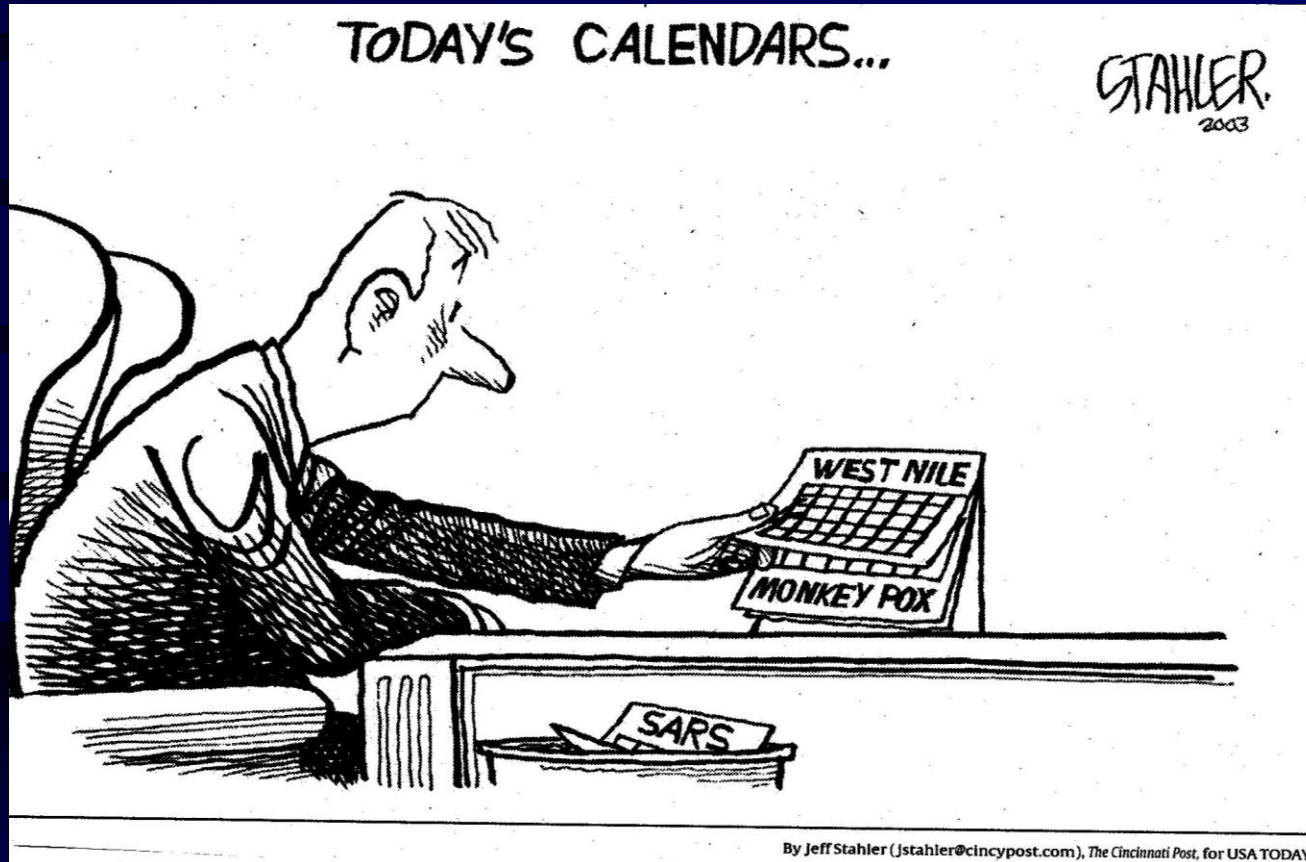
Department Recommendations

- As presented on November 6, 2007
 - Delete “similar fur bearing mammals” to clarify the existing code that allows certain exotic animals
 - The amendment would allow small pets such as gerbils, rats, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, ferrets, chinchillas, and mink
- Rodent and reptile considerations should remain as written in current ordinance
- Could further clarify definition of exotic animals and wildlife

Possible Alternatives

- Allow only specific macropods (wallabies)
- Allow only those that are born in the U.S. and not imported
- Allow only certain species with restricted weight limits to reduce risk of injury to small children and animals; also to limit car accidents - if wallabies found running at large
- Require surgical sterilization to prevent breeding and limit the chance of feral colonies
- Require Animal Maintenance Permits for wallabies in order to track ownership for running at large and disease investigation

NYS Response to Rodent Associated Monkeypox



Bryan Cherry, VMD, PhD
New York State Department of Health

Questions?